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## Voices in the Crowd

*Remarks as prepared by U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta,  
Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District, May 11, 2001*

“Good morning. It is always a pleasure to return to my home state, particularly when there’s good news to celebrate. And clearly there is much good news going on in Santa Barbara.

Under the leadership of General Manager Gary Gleason, the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District has become the national leader in incorporating alternative fuel vehicles into its fleet. And with a 47 percent fare-box recovery ratio, MTD is one of the most efficient transit operators in the country.

With a third of your buses powered by electricity, you are already responding to President Bush’s call for innovation and cutting-edge 21st century technologies to advance energy conservation. And clearly you are thinking outside of the box, because you’ve been using 21st century technologies for nearly a decade now.

I am also very impressed with your efforts to incorporate Intelligent Transportation Systems into your transit program. Once again, MTD gets it. There’s a story I always tell about ITS. Instead of signs that just alert drivers to “congestion ahead,” we need to provide them with alternate directions to drive around the congestion. Now that’s real transportation alternatives.

MTD’s demonstration project with NextBus Information Systems is about real transportation alternatives. By using the Global Positioning System and cellular communications, MTD is working to provide riders with useful, real-time arrival information.

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*U.S. Secretary Norman Mineta visits the  
Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District*

Your “Electric Avenue” concept has proven to be a very effective strategy for conserving energy and improving the environment. This speaks to the President’s commitment to support alternative fuel vehicles in order to promote fuel economy and a cleaner environment.

Electric buses, hybrid electric vehicles, fuel cell-powered vehicles, and alternative fuel engines are all new technologies that offer transportation choices that meet our needs for cleaner air, quieter neighborhoods, better health and safety, and more energy efficiency for reduced petroleum dependence.

This morning I want to share some thoughts with you about a topic that I know is on the minds of everyone in California today — energy. With the price of fuel and electricity rates rising higher and higher there is much cause for concern.

Demand for energy in the U.S. is outstripping supply. That demand will continue to grow dramatically to keep pace with the high-tech economy of the 21st century. And identifying a plan of action for our nation’s long-term energy

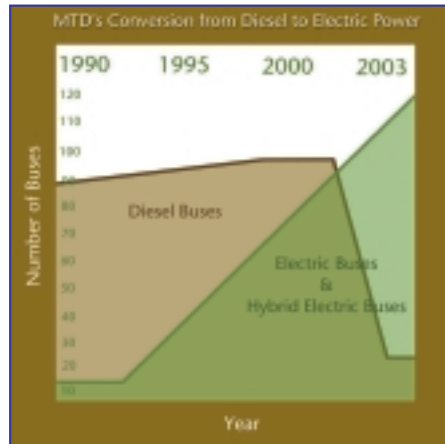
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# All Around The Town

Electric vehicles were pioneered in Santa Barbara. Starting with six Lunar Land Rovers, continuing with the Denver Mall Electric Buses, the Georgetown University Fuel Cell Buses and on through the world famous Downtown Waterfront Electric Shuttle, the team of engineers in Santa Barbara and at the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) have continued to prove the viability of this clean, quiet and enjoyable way to power a bus.

California is the home of the hot-rod, it is also home to tough emission regulations, a tight electricity market and sprawl. Charging electric buses during the dead of night, when power is cheap and plentiful, has reinforced Santa Barbara's choice to pursue electric buses. MTD's 90 bus fleet already meets California Air Resources Board (CARB) fleet emissions rule simply because so many of its buses emit nothing. More importantly, the Electric Shuttles also ushered-in a ten-fold increase in choice riders to downtown commerce. Santa Barbara is now making further investment in MTD to help balance its growth and traffic.

At MTD we're taking the next steps to



*Improved air quality as a result of conversion from diesel to electric propulsion*

bring more people downtown by bus. The Electric Avenue or BRT Lite as some call it, is a partnership that will bring the best of information technologies and Electric Buses to their next test. In the meantime, MTD is looking further into the future.

MTD currently operates 73 diesel and 27 electric buses. To meet increasing demand, serve community preferences and satisfy emission regulations, MTD plans to replace 40 of the diesels with 39 electrics and 25

hybrids. After retiring some of the oldest electrics and all old diesels, the MTD fleet will stand at 50 electric, 25 hybrid and only 33 clean diesel buses. Our customers like electric buses and other communities up and down the State, across the US and from Asia and Europe visit Santa Barbara to see how it is done. We're proud of our success. We appreciate Congresses help and we're ready to deliver more. Our electric bus projects have proven to have worldwide significance and federal help is required to continue.

Electric buses do add panache as well as risk to our bus system. MTD leads the way in electric buses while it pays the highest percentage of its costs from its farebox. MTD is also recognized as one of the top five most efficient and effective transit system in the nation. In a recent report to Congress, the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration concluded that several "small transit intensive cities" dispel the notion that people ride buses mostly in big cities. Indeed, the study concluded that these "small transit intensive cities", led by Santa Barbara, exceed the per capita ridership of many of them.

## Hybrid Vehicles

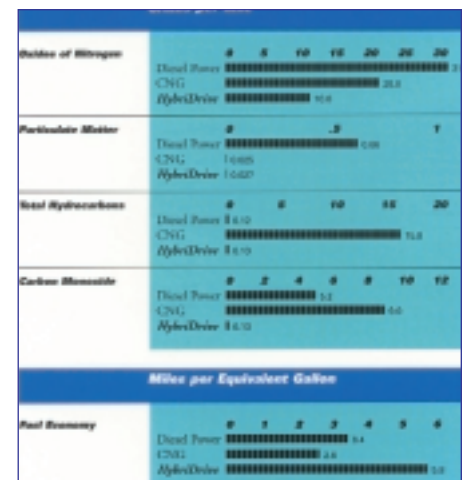
Over the past decade, efforts to reduce emissions, especially from the diesel engine, have gained momentum. Anyone who has suffered behind a poorly tuned diesel truck or bus can attest. In California, this effort culminated in 1998 with California's Air Resources Board (CARB) designating particulate emissions from diesel engines a toxic air contaminant. Subsequently, transit operators across the State must meet more stringent emission requirements.

Until now, however, alternatives such as methanol and CNG have not fared well mainly because their use has been based on political mandates instead of practical considerations. The poor performance of methanol and CNG buses was tolerated because of their air-quality benefits. Now with the advent of the hybrid-electric transit vehicle improved air-quality and performance can co-exist.

A recent study by the Northeast Advanced Vehicle Consortium compared emissions and performance criteria of diesel, CNG, and hybrid-diesel electric buses. The rigorous tests were conducted over a wide range of duty cycles and the clear winner, both in terms of emissions, fuel economy, and performance was the hybrid-electric. The overall benefits of the hybrid-electric transit bus were clear to New York City (the largest purchaser of transit buses in the country) when it recently ordered 250 of them.

MTD's current fleet is over 25% battery-electric, a remarkable achievement on its own. After the next bus purchase, the fleet will be over 50% battery electric. Yet what differentiates MTD's success with alternative fuels, in this case battery electric, is that the primary motivation for the DWS shuttle was to increase ridership - to put a better product on the street - and not to meet a government mandate. The battery-electric propulsion

system was a secondary, albeit highly successful, consideration. MTD is following this same idea with respect to the hybrid buses, and it expects similar success. When MTD replaces its existing 40' diesel fleet with hybrid transit buses, over two-thirds of the fleet will be electric propulsion.



*Emissions comparison chart*

## CROSTOWN SHUTTLE

Residents of the Eastside and Westside neighborhoods of Santa Barbara have a convenient new option for travel to the downtown core. The expanded Crosstown Shuttle provides frequent and fast service targeted to downtown employees who currently drive to work, and to riders who wish to travel downtown to transfer to another bus. In addition to providing service from the neighborhoods into the downtown core, the Crosstown Shuttle provides an exciting new means of travel between the Eastside and the Westside. New 22-foot electric shuttles provide a smooth, clean, and quiet ride, and ensure that the Crosstown Shuttle successfully competes with the comfort of the automobile.

The MTD first proposed the Crosstown Shuttle in its 1998 South Coast Transit Plan. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments funded the Crosstown Shuttle and other new routes from the Plan as the South Coast Transit Priorities, a transit enhancement project of the MTD. The project is scheduled for full implementation following delivery of the MTD's new 30-foot electric-propulsion buses, planned for late 2003.

The MTD operates this early implementation of the Crosstown Shuttle in partnership with the City of Santa Barbara. The City recognized the value of the Crosstown Shuttle and, for the first time, funded a transit enhancement with parking rev-

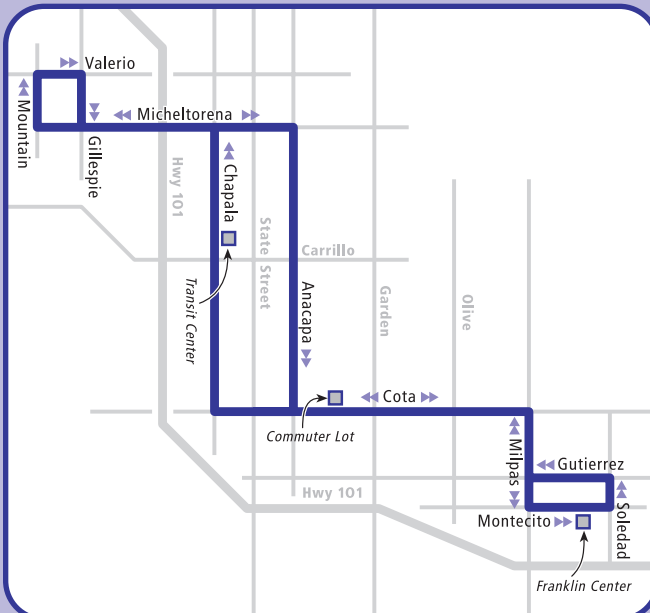


*The Crosstown Shuttle on Anacapa Street*

enue. The new service assists the City in achieving the vision of Santa Barbara as a city in which use of the automobile is a choice, not a necessity, by increasing the availability and use of transit. The service also helps downtown merchants achieve their goals of enhancing downtown parking and controlling the level of traffic.

The Crosstown Shuttle operates weekdays from 7:00 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. Because the route traverses the downtown core from Micheltorena Street to Cota Street, downtown employees who live in the Westside or the Eastside can now arrive at their destination without the need to transfer to another bus or walk several blocks. Expanded hours of service, a short travel time, and transportation throughout the downtown core combine to make the Crosstown Shuttle attractive to commuters who currently drive themselves to their downtown employment.

The Crosstown Shuttle was expanded to serve the Eastside on December 10, marking Phase 2 of the service. In July, the MTD introduced the Crosstown Shuttle Phase 1, which operated between the Westside and the downtown core.



*The Crosstown Shuttle Route*

...downtown employees who live in the Westside or the Eastside can now arrive at their destination without the need to transfer to another bus or walk several blocks.



needs is one of President Bush and Vice President Cheney's highest domestic priorities. Supplies have not kept pace with the demand for energy and the delivery of those supplies has been limited by an aging infrastructure that is past its prime. Our needs in the new century will require more energy – but the challenge is to meet those needs through a thoughtful plan for conservation combined with clean and efficient energy production.

The Bush Administration's Energy Task Force is developing a national energy strategy to promote dependable, affordable and environmentally sound production and distribution of energy for the future.

There are no quick fixes. Our nation has a long-term energy supply problem that simply cannot be solved overnight. The National Energy Plan, to be released this week, is based on long-term thinking and will take a comprehensive approach to four key energy issues: increasing supply; modernizing infrastructure; increasing energy conservation; and improving energy independence.

Infrastructure improvement is key to meeting our energy demands. Given present trends, demand for natural gas is expected to rise 62 percent by 2020. These demands will require an additional 38,000 miles of pipelines and 225,000 miles of distribution to be constructed.

The Energy Task Force's recommendations will include the consideration of changes to regulatory requirements to

Clearly, MTD has set the standard for other transit authorities to follow in the 21st century.

encourage this kind of new infrastructure construction. We are looking at streamlining the permit process, but let me assure you that we will not sacrifice the environment for the sake of energy. The point is not to roll back regulations, but to foster a climate that allows for the responsible enhancement of necessary infrastructure. President Bush believes that conservation must be an integral part of making sure our nation has a reasonable energy policy. In fact, most of the Task Force's recommended financial incentives go toward conservation and renewable energy such as wind and solar power, and tax credits that will be offered for vehicles that run on alternative fuels.

As I stated earlier, there are no quick fixes. But the Bush Administration is committed to developing a long-term policy that addresses the energy needs of our nation. It will be a policy that promotes dependable, affordable, and environmentally sound production and distribution of energy for the future. It will be a policy that promotes cutting-edge, 21st century technologies to increase energy supplies and uses energy more efficiently and in more environmentally responsible ways.

The MTD Electric Shuttle Bus System is a shining example of what President Bush and Vice President Cheney are promoting for our nation's energy policy. It is an effective alternative transportation strategy that conserves energy and preserves the quality of life for the people of Santa Barbara. Clearly, MTD has set the standard for other transit authorities to follow in the 21st century. Keep up the great work. Thank you very much.



*U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta with Leslie Rogers, FTA Region 9 Administrator*

*Transitworks! is a newsletter published by the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District*

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